QUAINT CLOCKS.

From Once-a-Week.

Ever since man first began to contrive machines to answer the momentous question, "What's o'clock?" he seems to have delighted in taxing his ingenuity to make the poor instruments complicate the answer. Not content with having the hour indicated on a dial, or sounded by a bell, he must needs have it manifested to his vision by dancing dolls, or announced to his ear by trumpet-blowing cherubim or gong-sounding monsters. Two thousand years ago, when the only known means of measuring time was by the trickling of water from one vessel to another, the clepsydra-maker indulged his fancy, and made his simple wares elaborate by the employment of fantastic contrivances for showing the time through the agency of automaton figures. The clepsydra of Ctesibius, for instance, consisted outwardly of a lachrymose mannikin whose falling tears supplied the water that impelled the instrument, while his jubilant brother, buoyed up on a floating pedestal, boldly pointed with a wand to the hours marked on an adjacent column. Coming to times a little less remote, we find the Persian King Haroun al-Raschid sending the Emperor Charlegne a water-clock, whereof Giffard, in his "History of France," gives this description:—"The dial was composed of twelve small doors, which represented the division of the hours; each door opened at the hour it was intended to represent, and out of it came the same number of little balls, which fell one by one, at equal distances of time, on a brass drum. It might be told by the eye what hour it was by the number of doors that were open; and by the ear by the number of balls that fell. When it was twelve o'clock, twelve horsemen in miniature issued forth at the same time, and marching round the dial, shut all the doors." Old St. Paul's was not without a curiosity of this character; for, according to Dugdale's history of the cathedral, there was a dial ordered in the reign of the third Edward, "to be made with all splendor imaginable. Which was accordingly done; having the image of an angel pointing to the hour both of the day and night." The bell, too, of this clock, or of its successor, was struck by the wooden ancestors of the monstrosities that are at present to be seen in front of Mr. Bennett's shop in Cheapside; they were a more numerous family in those days than they are now, for it seems to have been a common thing for churches and market-houses to have their "Jacks o' th' clock," as the automaton bell-strikers were termed. Decker, who wrote his "Gull's Hornbook" in 1609, calls the St. Paul's figures "Paul's Jacks;" he says, "The great dial is your last monument: where, bestow one-half of the three-score minutes to observe the sauciness of the Jacks that are above the man in the moon there; the strangeness of their motion will quit your labor." He further adds, "But howsoever if Paul's Jacks be once up with their elbows and quarreling to strike eleven, as soon as ever the clock has parted them, and ended the fray with the hammer, let not the Duke's gallery contain you any longer."

Other cathedrals besides Strasbourg have marionette clocks of less complicated structure, but still very curious as displays of ingenuity. There is one at Lyons which has, like its Strasbourg prototype and many others, a crowing cock that flaps his wings and thrice sounds his shrill clarion every three hours. In a gallery beneath him, a door opens on one side and out comes the Virgin Mary, and from an opposite door the angel Gabriel, who meets and salutes her. A dove descends upon the Virgin's head; and after these puppets have retired, a reverend father comes forth and pantomimically gives the spectators a blessing. The days of the week are represented by seven figures, each of which takes its place in a niche on the morning of the day it symbolizes, and remains there till midnight. Then there is the clock at Venice, which has a similar puppet show; and doubtless scores of them are scattered about the continent; some that, like that at Lyons, have received attention, and are in some sort of going order, and others buried in the dust and lumber of disused cloisters and towers.

Germany, the country of toymakers, seems always to have excelled in the manufacture of these mechanical drolleries. Augsburg was especially famous for them, as, indeed, it was for the more simple and exclusively useful form of clocks. Most of the figure-moving timekeepers were constructed there; and it is said that they were chiefly made and used for presents from ambassadors of Christian countries to Oriental princes and barbarians. The South Kensington Museum contains some half dozen Augsburg clocks; but these have no automata; and doubtless many others are to be found in the art collections of our country. A clock of unique design, conjectured to be of German make, and of date about the commencement of the seventeenth century, was exhibited at a meeting of the Archæological Institute in 1855. It was in the form of a griffin bearing an escutcheon, on which was the dial. The animal rolled its eyes constantly whilst the clockwork was in movement; opened its mouth when the quarters struck; and flapped its wings at the striking of the hour.

Nicholas Grollier de Serviere, an old soldier who had served in the Italian army, and who died in 1689, devoted his latter days to the invention and construction of a variety of whimsical clocks, some of which he made for the sole purpose of delighting and surprising his visitors. A figure of a tortoise, dropped into a plate of water having the hours marked on the rim, would float round and stop at the proper hour, telling what it was o'clock like a learned pig. A lizard ascended a pillar on which the hours were marked, and pointed to the time as it advanced. A mouse did the same thing by creeping along an hour-marked cornice.

During the last century, music was added to automaton clocks to increase the charms and accompany the diversions of the figures. According to an old advertisement, there was one exhibited at the Duke of Marlborough's Head, in Fleet street, which, "besides divers curious motions, performed:—1. A concert of Italian and English music, to the number of thirty-two different tunes, including sets of airs, minuets, jiggs, borees, sarabands, courants, etc., on organs, trumpets, flutes, and flageolets, very true and melodious. It shifted a fresh tune of itself, and repeated at pleasure. 2. In the course of this harmony, the seven liberal sciences, viz., musick, optic, physick, architecture, painting, mathematicks, and eloquence, appeared, each with some proper instrument to denote his profession. 3. Apollo broke through a cloud with his harp in his hand. 4. A cuckoo called, and seventeen small birds warbled their proper notes as natural as if living." Although this is called in the advertisement a "musical clock," there is no mention of any horological part, and we strongly suspect that it was merely a sort of musical-box with automata, of course moved by wheels, or "clock-work"—as all wheel mechanisms to this day are popularly called—driven by a spring and governed by a fly, as old clocks were and modern musical-boxes are. But if this was not a genuine musical clock, that one was which was exhibited at the Royal Exchange in 1740; for in addition to performing the functions of an orrery, and "solving many curious problems in astronomy," it delighted those who paid half a crown to see and hear it with moving figures and shifting scenery, which rolled away to musical accompaniment, in true modern "transformation" style. The musical part embraced "four sets of keys," so that those who did not like the mechanical playing could have their better tastes gratified by the music of living performers. The Rev. J. Wesley tells in his journal of a clock which he saw at Lurgan, in Ireland, in 1762, which was not merely musical, but vocal. A figure of an old man, in a case with a curtain drawn before it, stood over against a clock. Every time the clock struck he opened the door with one hand, drew back the curtain with the other, turned his head as if looking round on the company, and then said, with a clear, loud, articulate voice, "past one," or two, or three, as the case might be. The maker, a Mr. Miller, wanted to sell the wonder; but, although so many came to see it that he was in danger of being ruined by his loss of time in showing it, no one seemed inclined to purchase it, or even reward his ingenuity—so he wisely took the whole thing to pieces. Christopher Pinchbeck, who gave his name to the famous alloy of which our forefathers were content to have their watch-cases made, was a noted constructor of musical-timekeepers; he called his house by the sign of the "Astronomico-Musical Clock." We may infer that the clock mentioned above as having been exhibited at the Royal Exchange was one of his construction; for the detailed advertisement of it answers exactly to an advertisement of the clocks made by him, which appeared in a weekly journal in the year 1721, nineteen years before the exhibition, and a few years after Pinchbeck's death. There was another eminent mechanical genius who made wonderful clocks in the last century; his name was James Cox, and he was not merely a mechanic, but had some ideas of the importance of art in beautifying mechanisms, for he employed Nollekens, the sculptor, and Zoffany, the painter, to make designs for his works. He made a host of curious and costly toys with the hope of selling them to Indian princes, but the Indian war frustrated his designs, and he was obliged to turn his curiosities to account by exhibiting them. This expedient failed, and at last he obtained a private act of Parliament empowering him to dispose of his museum by lottery. The collection must have included some really wonderful specimens of ingenuity and exquisite workmanship; precious stones and metals were the chief materials employed in their manufacture; but the most curious of them hardly come within the limits of our subject, and we are here obliged to pass them by without description. Mason, a contemporary poet, said, in allusion to the display:—

"Great Cox, at his mechanicall,
Bids orient pearls from golden dragons fall;
Each little dragonet, with brazen grin,
Gapes for the precious prize, and gulps it in.
Yet, when we peep behind the scene,
One master wheels direct the whole machine;
The self-same pearls, in nice gradation, all
Around one common centre rise and fall."

After all, a musical-clock resolves itself into little more than a musical-box, set going at certain times by a timekeeper, just as an alarum is let off. The connection between the clock and the music is not more intimate than was the music and steam which constituted an exhibition entitled "Music by Steam," offered to the curiosity-mongers in London a few years ago, and the realization of which consisted in a barrel organ turned by a little steam engine!

The mention of alarums leads us to notice one or two of these useful clock-accessories that come within range of the curious. A very active member of this family of mechanical watchmen was erected in the nursery of Dublin workhouse a century ago, the inscription on which sufficiently describes it—"For the benefit of infants protected by this hospital, Lady Arabella Denny presents this clock, to mark, that as children reared by the spoon must have but a small quantity of food at a time, it must be offered frequently; for which purpose, this clock strikes every twenty minutes, at which notice all the infants not asleep must be discreetly fed." Alarum clocks have been made that, besides rousing the sleeper, would ignite a match and light a candle for him to get up by, and we lately saw one that, in addition to these functions, boiled a cup of coffee for the early riser's breakfast. The wonderful couch shown at the 1851 Exhibition, which tilted its occupant out at any desired hour, is probably in the memory of many a reader of these remarks; but perhaps the prettiest and most agreeable of these contrivances was the bed made by a Bohemian mechanic in 1858, which set off with one of Auber's gentle airs when it was pressed by a tired body, and thundered forth a clashing march at the time the sleeper desired to be awakened.

A Character.

A letter from Paris says:—"Every person who has been to the French and Italian opera houses knows by sight the venerable white head, tall Astrachan cap and chocolate-colored garb of the musical Persian. He is almost as much a fixture at the Salle Ventadour as the chandelier. He has never been known to miss a night, has never had a day's illness, and has occupied the same stall on the first tier ever since I can remember. On the off-nights he goes to the French opera house. Music is his only pleasure. He knows no one, and no one, except his servant and his tailor, has ever been within the doors of his apartment, which is situated on a first floor in the Rue de Rivoli. The name of this singular individual is Mohammed-Ismael-Khan. He is eighty-four years old, and his fortune amounts to more than two millions of francs. He lives in the simplest manner, never drinks any wine, the only luxury of his life being rare delicious fruit. A drive to the Bois every day and the opera in the evening makes up the sum total of his harmless existence, which, however, during the revolution of 1848 ran the risk of terminating in a tragic manner. While standing at the window, looking out upon the agitated street, he was perceived by a *garde nationale*, who took aim at him with his musket. The affrighted Mohammed-Ismael had fortunately the time to disappear into the kitchen, whence he did not emerge until Paris was itself again."

Death of a French Savant.

Death has been unusually busy of late among the scientific men of Paris. Three celebrated physicians—Velpeau, Royer, and Chartroule—have died within the past month. The last death, which took place a few days since, was that of Doctor Chartroule, of the Academy of Medicine.

Doctor Chartroule had devoted his talents to the specialty of diseases of the lungs, and was the author of a system of treatment which has been a fertile subject of discussion between the learned medical societies of Continental Europe. Doctor Chartroule was still comparatively young, being only fifty-six years of age, when an attack of paralysis terminated fatally.

—There has been a tumult in the Florence National Theatre, owing to the feebleness of manner in which a new opera, *Il Foletto di Gresy*, and a ballet, *Bedra la Maliarda*, were interpreted. The public were especially indignant at the ballet, and rose in riot.

—The losses of Mr. Sothern during his late attempt to make "Lord Dundreary" acceptable to the French people, at the Théâtre Italien, Paris, amount to £1800.

Babes in the Wood—An Incident in Australia.

An English paper has this story from Australia:—

"Three tiny boys, colony born, of Daylesford, in Victoria, started into the bush to look for some runaway goats. The eldest was only seven, but Australian lads and lasses have a continent for a playground, and nothing was feared. When, however, the little ones missed the dinner hour, and then tea, their parents grew anxious, and searched the neighborhood in vain. Night fell, and, with the aid of the local police, the search was extended, and though it lasted till the morning, the children were still missing. At dawn a storekeeper came in who had seen the small wanderers on the road overnight; and then a boy, who had given them the right direction as he passed. This was all that could be gained throughout the second day; but now the little scattered community had heard of the loss, and was on the alert. The quartz miners put their tools by and went out into the bush; so did the sawyers at the steam-mill; and so did the woodcutters in the scrub; and the third day was thus passed in a vigorous search. Still no trace or tidings, except a faint footmark going in the wrong direction towards the Warrbee river, and therefore the good folks were growing much concerned, and it was settled at a public meeting that all hands should strike work and go to look for the babies.

"Accordingly next day—the fourth—every shop was shut, every tool and implement was left idle; six or seven hundred men, women, and boys turned out in all directions into the dense scrub, to hunt the strayed ones up. Seventy pounds were collected as a reward for the finder, though no one wanted that incentive, and the man at the steam mill kept the whistle going all day to guide the little feet home, if they were still able to stir. For days these kindly souls of the Victorian township kept at the hunt. It was in vain; at the end of the week the shops had to be reopened, and work mournfully resumed, for the children could not be discovered. The heart-broken parents publicly thanked their neighbors for doing all that human gentleness and good-will could do, and so the melancholy narrative ends, for the children were hopelessly lost and must have laid down to die in the wilds. It will be hereafter a colonial tale to match our British 'Babes in the Wood,' with the blue bird and the bell-bird for 'cock robin,' and the generous Daylesford folk to make a pleasant verse instead of the 'wicked uncle.'"

Chinese Music.

Captain R. E. Cane writes to the London *Athenæum* in defense of the musical acquirements of the Chinese, a people among whom he has lived for a number of years, and with whose language he has a fair acquaintance. He says:—

"In Williams' 'Middle Kingdom' will be found a Chinese treble scale of two octaves—D to C^2—with the names of the notes which are in English spelling, for the first octave, Ho, Sze, I, Shang, She, Kung, Fan. Probably the most popular Chinese melody is one of much sweetness and expression—the Moh-li Hwa, or 'Jasmin Flower.' This song is sufficiently European in structure to attract the attention of even very unmusical 'outer barbarians:' and it is so universally sung (though, it is true, by males in *falsetto*) and played on guitars, flutes, and *quasi*-violins from north to south of China, that I can scarcely understand how any one who has ever strolled even in the main street of Hong Kong (which is not the most Chinese place in the world) on any moonlit summer night, can have failed to hear and notice it. It was even worked up into English music (a waltz, I think), though not very successfully, and was published at home some years ago. A not very perfect notation of it, with the words, will be found in the history of 'Lord Macartney's Embassy,' where appear also several other native airs, sufficiently pleasing, and by no means barbarous.

"The 'Tripitaka,' published by the exhibitor of the giant Chang, also contained some fragments of other Chinese tunes. In the last quoted book also, and in the 'Chinese Repository,' will be found drawings of several Chinese musical instruments, a glance at which will show the absurdity of the good old idea that they can only produce 'two or three' notes, the flute having more than twice that number of holes, and the lutes, etc., possessing several strings, with arrangements for fingering.

"Without desiring to assert that Chinese music is not in a low state, or that the voices of the natives are not harsh and flat, I venture, *quoad me*, to think they possess no slight capacity and an universal taste, at least for melody, if not for music proper. And does it not seem to be time for men writing about China to describe soberly and accurately what really exists there, and to abandon the sensational and paradoxical tone until lately in fashion?"

DIVORCE AND MARRIAGE IN ENGLAND.—In England in 1865 forty-nine divorced persons again married. Twenty-three gentlemen, who had got rid of their wives, replaced them by as many spinsters. Four gentlemen similarly situated, but of a bolder order of mind, sought in the society of four widows a return of that bliss which had vanished at the interference of Sir Cresswell Cresswell, and seventeen bachelors and three widowers, men of unexampled courage, led to the altar twenty divorced ladies. In only one case did a lady and gentleman who had both disregarded the marriage tie again subject themselves to its restrictions. So says the London *Spectator*.

GAS FROM COFFEE.—M. Babinet has reported to the French Academy the following information with regard to the evolution of gas during the process of making coffee. If finely ground roasted coffee be steeped in cold water, gas will be evolved to an extent about equal in volume to the quantity of coffee used; and this action will take place very rapidly, insomuch that if a bottle be half filled with coffee duly ground, and the remaining space then filled with water until the cork is reached, an explosion will ensue, sufficient in force to expel the cork, or even break the bottle.

FOSSIL IVORY.—It is said that the tusks of at least 100 mammoths, or about 40,000 pounds of ivory, are bartered for every year in New Siberia. Notwithstanding the large amount carried away, the supply does not seem to diminish. These remains are scattered along the valleys and near the mouths of great rivers; and in a number of instances the mammoth entire has been discovered, with its skin protected by a double covering of hair and skin, and its flesh in such state of preservation as to afford food for dogs and wild beasts. Whatever the cause of the Siberian mammoth's death, it is certain they were suddenly enveloped in ice, which has not been disturbed since they were first entombed.